

764923

Parliamentarians for East Timor

*c/o 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HW, UK
Tel. (081) 771-2904, Fax (081) 653-0322*

Lord Avebury calls for UN monitoring team to go to East Timor

Lord Avebury of Parliamentarians for East Timor has today called on Portugal, as the Administering Power of East Timor, to press for a United Nations monitoring team to go to East Timor without delay. Conditions in the territory have deteriorated sharply since preparations for a Portuguese parliamentary mission to visit East Timor on 4 November were suspended, following disagreement between Portugal and Indonesia about the foreign journalists who would accompany the MPs.

Lord Avebury said that the UN Security Council should convene to assess the situation in the territory. He has also written to the UN Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, asking that he send his representatives to the territory and explore the possibility of a UN team going there.

Less than 48 hours after the suspension of the visit was announced, Indonesian troops stormed a parish church in Dili, killing two persons and arresting fifty others.

After the attack, which occurred at 1.30 am on Monday, 28 October, hundreds of people flocked to defend the church. The funeral on Tuesday was attended by thousands of people who followed the cortege through the streets of Dili, calling for the release of all those arrested. There are as-yet unconfirmed reports of clashes between troops and local people in other parts of East Timor.

Before the visit was suspended, Bishop Belo, Apostolic Administrator of Dili, warned the Portuguese parliamentarians that the safety of his people could only be guaranteed after they left if an international monitoring team remained in East Timor. Lord Avebury said:

The failure to reach agreement on the visit has placed the East Timorese people in grave danger. They eagerly awaited the visit, hoping it would pave the way for them to press for a solution to their unfulfilled demand for self-determination and at least afford them an opportunity of expressing their views before an international audience. They were well aware of the repression threatened by the forces of occupation but were determined to press their demands on the visiting MPs, whatever the consequences. It is not difficult to imagine their frustration, having lost this opportunity for the time being at least, now abandoned to their fate and at the mercy of the illegal occupiers of their country.

Lord Avebury strongly condemned the atrocity on 28 October and has called on the British Government to support moves to discuss East Timor in the Security Council. He also asked Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd to support the idea of sending a UN mission to the territory.

He has meanwhile written to members of *Parliamentarians for East Timor* throughout the world to join in efforts to convince their governments and the United Nations to act in defence of the people of East Timor.

31 October 1991

Founder Members

Satsuki Eda-MHR (Japan), Tony Lamb MHR (Australia), Lord Avebury (UK)

Secretary: Carmel Budiardjo

Portugal lacks global strategy on East Timor, says CDPM

The following press release was issued by the Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People (CDPM), the main Lisbon-based East Timor solidarity group, on 30 October 1991:

On the day that the suspension of the visit by a Portuguese parliamentary delegation to East Timor was announced, the CDPM publicly expressed the hope that the organs of sovereignty, under these exceptional circumstances, had considered their decision in the context of a global strategy for the question of East Timor.

It now appears to us that there was not sufficient consideration of the repercussions at all levels of a decision of this nature, and that a Portuguese state strategy which is directed towards promoting and guaranteeing the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence (Article 293 of the Constitution of the Republic) still needs to be elaborated and established.

Words and statements are not enough. We urge Portugal to act in accordance with its internationally recognised status as the Administering Power of the non-self-governing territory of East Timor.

Declarations and interviews for internal consumption are not enough. We call on the Portuguese State to explain, clearly, publicly and in a way that will be heard internationally, why it decided to suspend the visit and what it intends to do to stop the repression that the Timorese population is now facing.

Good intentions and judicious argumentation are not enough. We call on the Administering Power to take immediate action to set in motion mechanisms leading to:

- international condemnation of the violence unleashed in East Timor by the occupying power,
- a thoroughgoing international investigation into the events that occurred in the territory on 28 October,
- an informal meeting of the UN Security Council to assess the deteriorating situation in the territory.

Given the gravity of the present moment, the expectations that were created and the frustrations of the Timorese because of the parliamentary visit, the isolation of the territory and the likelihood of an escalation of violation, we implore the organs of sovereignty to ask the UN Secretary-General to send without delay a group of observers nominated by him to follow the evolution of the situation during the coming weeks.

Once again, Portugal must not yield to the temptation of dealing with the question of East Timor as if it were an internal political affair. The Timorese, who dare to place so much faith and confidence in the Portuguese people and their organs of sovereignty as effective allies in their struggle for the right to self-determination and independence, are entitled to expect that we make every effort necessary to ensure the realisation of their most basic aspirations. Only in this way can Portugal fully play its role in the international community.